

But the smaller islands of Old Providence, accessible only by ferry or small plane, and Ketlina, connected by a bridge, largely escaped the fate of San Andres. The population of both is almost entirely Raizal, and their communities have successfully resisted efforts to bring in big development projects or build military installations there until now.

The islands were hit very hard by Hurricane Iota last November. On Old Providence, hundreds of houses were damaged and hundreds more destroyed completely.

Colombian President Ivan Duque promised to rebuild in 100 days. It has now been 6 months. The next hurricane season is on the horizon, and reconstruction is nowhere near complete.

The delay is partly due to the government's failure to properly consult with those most affected. But what the government did do was allow the Colombian Navy to take advantage of the crisis and build a new dock, a project the community had previously rejected due to the risk of environmental damage.

The navy has installed its dock near a fishermen's co-op whose own dock was destroyed by Iota, cutting off its members' access. In response, fishermen whose livelihoods are at risk have been protesting for 62 days.

There is a profound difference of vision between the islanders and the mainlanders. The Raizal fear that if the government continues to ignore them, their way of life in Old Providence and Ketlina will be overtaken by the mainland population, as has happened in San Andres. That would be a major violation of the human rights of the Raizal people.

In 2004, when the U.N. Special Rapporteur on racism visited the archipelago, the Raizal communities complained of political discrimination and marginalization from the decision-making processes that affected their territory. They also described cultural domination by the mainland, for example, the exclusive use of Spanish as the language of instruction and pressure to convert to Catholicism to be able to advance economically.

More than 15 years later, the Colombian Government persists with many of the same practices that led the Raizal to lodge those human rights complaints.

It is time to change course. It is time to prioritize the human rights of the Raizal people. It is time for the government to recognize the Raizal as legitimate interlocutors and respect their right to protect their ancestral lands.

I urge the Duque government to accelerate reconstruction so that the people have adequate shelter and medical facilities as soon as possible, certainly before the next hurricane season.

I urge the government to stop importing labor from the mainland and, instead, employ local Raizal workers.

I urge the government to remove the navy's new dock, rebuild the co-op's

dock instead, and end further militarization of the islands.

I urge a thorough review of any U.S. Government resources used for post-Iota reconstruction to ensure that they were expended in full compliance with requirements of prior consultation.

And I encourage the United Nations and the Inter-American human rights bodies to immediately review the situation of the Raizal people and issue new recommendations to the Colombian Government to ensure that their rights are fully protected going forward.

CELEBRATING GEORGE MILLS' 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor George Mills, an extraordinary Alabamian I recently met in Decatur at a Kiwanis pancake breakfast. George is a former World War II prisoner of war and will celebrate his 100th birthday on May 23.

The youngest of eight children, George graduated from Decatur High School in 1939. While in high school, George worked for Western Union, delivering telegrams on his bicycle from 5 to 11 every night. After high school graduation, George sold pianos for Forbes Piano Company.

In 1942, at age 21, George Mills enlisted in the Army and was assigned to Company E, 109th Division under General Omar Bradley, making him a member of one of World War II's best-trained divisions.

Sergeant Mills arrived on Omaha Beach 25 days after D-day. For 7 months, he was in combat and engaged in four major battles, including the Battle of Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, and the battle at the Hurtgen Forest.

After the Hurtgen Forest battle, George and his company were sent to the Germany-Luxembourg border, where, one morning, they were awakened by exploding rockets and artillery. His company was surrounded by 15,000 Axis forces. Despite overwhelming odds, they held their ground for several days.

Eventually, Axis forces blew a hole in the house Mills was sheltered in. Bazookas and flamethrowers followed, setting the entire house on fire. George was injured by shrapnel.

On December 18, 1944, after more than 2 years of service, George was captured by the Germans. After the fight, the Germans flattened the surrounding town, shooting civilians and the mayor.

The Germans interrogated the soldiers before taking them to a German POW camp, where they were fingerprinted, photographed, given dog tags, and registered as prisoners of war. They remained there for 2 days before the Germans segregated the soldiers, sending officers to concentration

camps, forcing privates to work, and sending noncommissioned officers, including George, on a 5-month walk across Europe that broke their souls and their bodies.

George tells many vivid stories of the cold winter, lack of food and sleep, abhorrent treatment by their captors, and the good friends made along the way.

Thankfully, George was liberated on April 14, 1945.

In October 1945, George was discharged and returned to America. After a very long bus ride home, he arrived at his Alabama hometown, where his sister was so excited to see him that she forgot to unlatch the screen door and his faithful bulldog nearly broke down the door to get to him.

Four years later, George and his wife, Charlie, were married. They enjoyed 66 years of marriage before Charlie passed away in December 2015.

In 1983, George retired but stayed busy, traveling with his wife across America, Canada, and Europe, while looking up George's Army buddies along the way.

One of George's proudest moments came on November 16, 2006, when France's President named George Mills a Chevalier for his gallantry during the liberation of France.

Vigorous as ever, George is involved in the Military Order of the Purple Heart, The American Legion, the VFW, the Masonic Lodge, the Kiwanis Club, and several other community organizations.

He is a frequent speaker at several local high schools, community organizations, and church groups. A true southern gentleman, he is a beloved representative of America's Greatest Generation.

Mr. Speaker, George Mills' exemplary service to America and his local community is emblematic of what makes America a great nation.

I wish George Mills the very best as he and his family celebrate his 100th birthday.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THOMAS HESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of my incredible friend, Tom Hess, a beloved resident of Northville, Michigan, who we lost last month after a courageous battle with cancer at the age of 76.

Tom was born in Detroit in the summer of 1944 to Raymond and Jessie Hess.

After graduating from Michigan State University in 1966, he joined the United States Army, where he attended Infantry Officer Candidate School. He went on to complete all the training necessary to become a Green Beret and proudly served his country as a first lieutenant during the Vietnam war. This was something that Tom was